



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Valerie Wilson Wesley

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All in all, I wasn't sure what to make of the afternoon. I hadn't known exactly what I was looking for when I'd headed up there, and I wasn't sure what I'd found. Words that come so easily usually aren't worth the air it takes to speak them, and the answers I'd gotten from mother, daughter and even Brandon Pike had all been as smooth as an old pimp's rap

— Devil's Gonna Get Him

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Quick Facts

- * Born in 1947
- * African-American mystery novelist and journalist
- * Author of the Tamara Hayle series

Biography

Valerie Wilson Wesley, an African-American writer, is the author of the Tamara Hayle Mystery Series, as well as other noted works. Wesley began her fiction writing career in her mid-40s and each novel has had its own success. In her mystery series, she tells about the rough streets of Newark, New Jersey, in the 1990s. With passionate, aggressive characters giving her works heart and body, her books are sure to keep the readers' attention and leave them asking for more.

If a good mystery is what you are looking for, Valerie Wilson Wesley's Tamara Hayle Mystery Series is your destination. With such amusing characters, it is hard to believe that they are just creations from Wesley's imagination. The diverse plots are enough to keep you reading from front to back cover and continue reading from book to book. If you can figure out the popular who-done-its by other authors, then you should try to take on a Tamara Hayle Mystery.

This page was researched and submitted by: Rosemarie Louise Brizak, Tiesha Renee Cooper, Rachel Elizabeth Feller and Wanda Michelle Raynes on 3/17/99. It was updated by Maria Zavialova on 12/5/04.



Valerie Wilson Wesley

Biography continued

Situations seem so real that readers will find themselves caught in the scenes of the story, hoping to solve a Tamara Hayle case. Every reader should solve the mystery of finding a great book by picking up one written by Valerie Wilson Wesley. Although Wesley writes about the Essex County area in New Jersey, she was born in Connecticut on November 22, 1947. As a child Wesley loved to write. When she played with her dolls, she made up stories for them. Wesley's favorite subject in school was English. Her favorite writers were Edgar Allan Poe and Agatha Christie. Also, her favorite mystery is *And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie. Wesley graduated from a high school in Madrid, Spain. She then attended Howard University, where she earned her master's degrees from both the Bank Street College of Education and the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism.

Valerie Wilson Wesley currently resides in Montclair, New Jersey, with her husband of twenty-eight years, noted screenwriter and playwright Richard Wesley (who is from the Newark area). Wesley gets all the regional information that she uses in her books from her husband. They have two daughters. One is now attending college, while the other lives in Los Angeles.

A recipient of the Griot Award from the New York Chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists, Valerie is currently the executive editor of *Essence* Magazine. Her first novel, *Where Do I Go From Here?*, was written in November, 1993 and has recently received the American Library Association's "Best Books for Reluctant Readers" citation. Unlike many African-American authors, most of Wesley's books have been translated and published in German. Therefore, she has an international readership. Currently Wesley is working on the sixth addition to the Tamara Hayle Mystery Series, which is sure to be as suspenseful and interesting as the first five novels. She plans to continue the series and hopes to have her works made into movies.



Valerie Wilson Wesley

Selected Biography

Works by the author

Willimena and the Cookie Money (2001).
Ain't Nobody's Business If I Do (2000).
The Devil Riding (2000).
Easier To Kill (1998).
Freedom's Gift: A Juneteenth Story (1997).
No Hiding Place (1997).
Where Evil Sleeps (1996).
Devil's Gonna Get Him (1995).
When Death Comes Stealing (1994).
Where Do We Go From Here? (1993).

Works about the author

Curtis, Christopher Paul. "Freedom's Gift by Valerie Wilson Wesley" (*New York Times*, 1997).
Stelter, Carrie. "Talking about the mystery of good writing" (*Star Ledger*, 1999).
Fischer-Hornung, Dorothea, and Monika Mueller. *Sleuthing ethnicity: the detective in multiethnic crime fiction* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003).
"Wesley, Valerie Wilson" in *Current biography yearbook* (H.W. Wilson, 2002)



Valerie Wilson Wesley

Works in languages other than English

Auf dem Weg nach oben: ein Fall für Tamara Hayle, trans. Gertraude Krueger (Diogenes, 2000).

Ein Engel über deinem Grab, transl. Gertraude Krueger (Diogenes, 1996).

Si le diable l'emporte (Librairie des Champs-Élysées, 1997).

Thiên thần bay qua mo con: (tiểu thuyết hình sự), trans. Kieu Hoa (Nhà Xuất Bản Văn Học, 2003).

In Teufels Küche, trans. Gertraude Krueger (Diogenes, 1998).

Gdy smierc sie zakrada, trans. Krzysztof Oblucki (Noir sur Blanc, 2001).

Danse avec le diable, transl. Pascal Aubin (Librairie des Champs-Élysées, 1998).